

North Chicago VA News



North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

May, 2001

Vocational Rehabilitation Unit Hosts Open House

The staff of the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit (VRU), formerly known as PRIDE, hosted an Open House on Wednesday, March 7th in their new area in Building 4, Room 28, the old Canteen area. Most staff hardly recognized this area which has been remodeled to house the sub assembly and courier clinics, a computer lab, and staff offices.

The VRU is designed to provide vocational treatment for both inpatients and outpatients. This rehabilitative program includes vocational assessment, job skills training, work hardening, job search, and attainment of competitive employment. Program components include: Incentive Therapy (IT), Compensated Work Therapy (CWT), and Transitional Work Experience (TWE). The IT program reimburses veterans for work performed in job assignments throughout the Medical Center. The CWT program remunerates veterans for work performed on contracts generated with private industry and governmental entities. CWT provides a continuum of vocational opportunities to include: the sub assembly clinic (Veteran's Industries), Supported Employment through contracts generated within the Medical Center; and TWE which places veterans with specific skills into work sites within the Medical Center and community business and manufacturers. For more information, please call (847) 688-1900, extension 83592.



Staff who are pictured include:

Maurice Bedford, CNA
David Weekly, Courier Clinic
Lee Parker, IT Coordinator
Jean McGovern, CWT Coordinator
Linda Wheeler, Program Support Assistant
Mary Little, Secretary
Shirley Hoffman, Program Coordinator
Robin Shellie, Sub Assembly Clinic
Ralph Ecxford, Courier Clinic

North Chicago Celebrates Volunteers Who Change The World



How does one person change the world? "Our volunteers at the North Chicago VA Medical Center do it every day by changing the world of the veterans we care for," explains Medical Center Director Al Pate.

There are over 770 men and women and approximately 37 organizations that make up the center's volunteer force. Total Volunteer Hours = 70,814 and Total Gifts and Donations are valued at over \$472,000.

Last year, volunteers accounted for 70,000 hours of work at the medical center. Their duties range from traditional roles as patient escorts to more specialized work such as our *Community Project Volunteers* and *Pet Therapy*.

"VA volunteers do change the world," said Patrick Sullivan, Associate Medical Center Director, "The work they do here is important, but beyond that, the spirit of love and friendship they share with each patient does change lives. They touch virtually every

patient we care for in a very human, fundamental way."

In celebration of the International Year of the Volunteer, VAVS is producing a collection of stories and profiles of 30 VA volunteers entitled "Faces of a

Grateful Nation - A Celebration of VA Volunteers." Volunteers from North Chicago VA are featured in the publication.

As summer approaches, the medical center is reminding teenagers of the opportunities to both serve and learn as VA student volunteers. "It's a great learning and maturing process for young adults," said Georgia Grant, Voluntary Specialist. "They work along side top-notch medical professionals and work with a living part of our American history - veterans who have served their country since World War II and actually made the history we read about."

We, at North Chicago VA, are truly fortunate to have some of the best volunteers in the nation - if not the world!



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North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to mary.waterman@med.va.gov

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Opinion Meter - Tell Us How We're Doing!



North Chicago began a pilot survey using a computerized polling machine, Opinionmeter, in the Audiology/Speech Pathology Department during March, 2001. Veterans are asked to answer 8 to 10 questions that are displayed on the Opinionmeter, regarding the care they received during their clinic visit, with multiple choice answers. After they select their answer, they touch the keypad and the answer is locked into the survey. This proved to be very successful and user friendly.

The Opinionmeter is an interactive opinion polling machine, designed to quickly and efficiently collect customer

satisfaction feedback at point of service. Survey responses are first screened for accuracy, then either accepted and tallied, or rejected as incorrect.

In April, the Opinionmeter began implementation throughout VISN 12. During the month of April, the Opinionmeter was placed in the Primary Care and Specialty Clinic areas at the North Chicago VA Medical Center..

This survey instrument will allow us to better serve our veterans, because results are available immediately.

Combined Federal Campaign Success

The Combined Federal Campaign is our chance to share and make a difference in our community. Thanks to all who helped make North Chicago VA's Campaign a huge success. Our goal was set at \$8,000 and over \$15,000 was collected. This represents an amazing 197% increase. A special thanks to Vernon D. (Dale) Henderson, Informatics, our North Chicago Chairperson, whose leadership and guidance have made this success possible.



Federal Women's Program Scholarship Recipient

For over two decades, the Federal Women's Program has provided assistance and encouragement to staff to pursue further education. Throughout the year, Program members donate time and energy to hold fundraisers to attain money for the scholarship. All employees are encouraged to apply for the scholarship. This year's scholarship was awarded to Ms. Roseann Conway, who is an Licensed Practical Nurse at NCVA. She is currently enrolled at



the College of Lake County in pursuit of an Associate Degree in Nursing.

Welcome New Employees

Sang Ahn Patient Services	Obadiah McGhee Canteen Service
Louis Armstrong Food & Nutrition	Cynthia Miller Patient Administration
Lionel Baker Food & Nutrition	Henry Stephen Navarro Facility Management
Denise Beaver Patient Administration	Elizabeth Recinto Patient Services
Jesus Chapa Facility Management	Sally Rob Patient Administration
Jeannie Chen Patient Services	Pateisha Smith Patient Services
Jason Chisum Canteen Service	Jackie Williams Canteen Service
Mae Doreza Patient Services	Neva Williams Patient Services
Grant Evert Patient Administration	Teresita Uchi Patient Services
Diane Martin Patient Administration	

A New Perspective

"Everyone should experience a missionary adventure at least once in his or her lifetime. It will open up a whole new perspective on life." according to Dr. Terry Schmidt, Chief of Dental Service. This past February Terry and his wife Nancy volunteered for missionary work in Santiago Atitlan. This is their sixth trip in the past four years volunteering their expertise as dentist and dental assistant respectively. To reach Santiago Atitlan, one must endure a 3.5 hour bus trip from Guatemala to Panajachel,



followed by a 1 hour boat ride. The everyday luxuries of America do not exist in this community. The population of Santiago Atitlan which is approximately 40,000 speak some Spanish but mostly their native Tzutujil. Dr. and Mrs. Schmidt learned the necessity to understand and speak the native tongue and have learned some Tzutujil words which help them while performing dental procedures. During their trip, the Schmidts saw 99 dental patients. Of these, 96 patients had dental work done; 96 teeth extractions and 20 teeth restorations. Thanks for giving us a new perspective.